

THE CABINET;

A REPOSITORY OF

POLITE LITERATURE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

TO the question, "why is another publication announced in *Boston*, where cold neglect has so frequently chilled the ardour of literary ambition?" the publisher of the Cabinet will offer no prolix replication. Modest assurance is never more embarrassed than in soliciting the attention of the public to a work, the character of which is wholly comprised in anticipations and futurities. Not wishing to surprise confidence by magnificent promises easy to make but always difficult to fulfil, the publisher will merely express his full persuasion that the gentlemen who have undertaken to conduct this literary miscellany will not disappoint the expectation he has formed of establishing a publication which shall merit public patronage.

The CABINET will be published on the Saturday of every week, and contain sixteen octavo pages. Some of the numbers will receive graphic embellishments.

Twenty-six numbers will form a volume, for which a title page and index will be furnished.

The price will be *two dollars* per volume. Subscribers in Boston it is expected will pay one dollar in advance at subscribing.

No papers will be sent out of the town unless the price of a volume be paid in advance.

BIOGRAPHY.

APZ
AZCZ
OFFICE

In the continuation of an account of the celebrated performer, the discussion of whose merits now occupies so large a share of general conversation, we shall endeavour to connect more information "from various sources culled," than can be found in any *one* of the meagre notices, which, during a diligent search, have attracted our attention. We cannot but congratulate the lovers of the drama on the opportunity now presented them, of witnessing talents which have secured the admiration of European taste. We may repeat the words of Richard with various emphasis.

"Now is the winter of *our* discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York."

GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE.

THIS distinguished tragedian was born in the barracks of Dublin, in the year 1756; his father being a subaltern in one of the regiments that composed the garrison. His mother was of Scotch extraction, and by her marriage incurred the displeasure of her family, who, with a very moderate portion of substance, richly abounded in pride. At little more than two years of age, our hero accompanied his father to London, where he continued till the year 1763, when he was placed in a school in the North of England. It was during his residence at this school, which lasted till 1771, that he became infected, as he himself terms it, with the theatrical *mania*.

The first play he ever read, was *Venice Preserved*: the first dramatic performance he ever witnessed was the representation of the *Provoked Husband*, in which Mr. James Aickin, late of Drury-lane theatre, acted the part of Lord Townly. From a clergyman in the town, he procured the loan of a complete edition of Shakspeare's works, which may truly be said to have formed the subject both of "his waking and his sleeping thoughts." Diligently he

read them by day, and meditated thereon by night; yet, however exquisite the mental delight he experienced from their perusal, it was not wholly exempt from alloy. All study was now suspended, or at least absorbed, in the more favourite pursuit of the drama: his school exercises were either neglected *in toto*, or slovenly performed. This of course, frequently subjected him to the penal code of school discipline, and induced consequences not the most pleasant to our hero's feelings. The passion, however, for theatricals had taken too deep root to be easily eradicated; and certain opportunities, which now occurred, of giving that passion the means of practical operation, tended still more to rivet and confirm his propensity, by adding the force of habit to the predisposing influence of will.

A party of his school companions having agreed to get up a play among themselves, our hero was consulted on the choice of the drama which, from circumstances, might be supposed best calculated for representation. He immediately fixed on Hamlet, intending to reserve the principal character for himself; but had the mortification to see the part usurped by one of his school-fellows, who founded his claim on seniority. The validity of the plea was admitted by universal suffrage, and young Cooke was obliged to content himself with Horatio. To console him, however, in some measure for this disappointment, he had the gratification of triumphing over his rival, by the superior applause awarded to his performance, though his talents were circumscribed to a part of comparatively small importance. Several actors, who witnessed the representation, gave him the most decided preference.

The next play which our juvenile party enacted, was Cato; in getting up which, a circumstance occurred still more unpropitious and revolting to our hero's feelings. To avoid all cause of altercation, it was agreed to deter-

mine the cast of the *Dramatis Personæ* by lot. Cooke drew Lucia, and such was the chagrin he experienced at the idea of wearing a petticoat, instead of strutting in a Roman toga, that the supposed degradation had nearly quenched the ardour of his passion, and crushed his scenic ambition in its very outset. But the plaudits he received, offered a seasonable relief to his irritation.

On his emancipation from school discipline, in 1771, he went to sea, and afterwards embarked in business; but less from inclination than necessity. Accordingly, at the age of twenty-one, he spurned at trade, as an occupation unworthy of his aspiring mind, and coming into possession of a legacy bequeathed him by a distant relation, quitted all employment, to indulge his favourite passion and pursuit. It was not, however, till he had run through his inheritance, that he made his *debut* on the public boards.

His first appearance on any regular stage, was in the spring of 1778, when he performed the part of Castalio, in the Orphan, at the Hay-market theatre, for the benefit of Mrs. Massey; and with such complete success, as determined him to embrace the profession as his future means of support. He played two or three subsequent nights at the Hay-market, and then joined a provincial company. From this period, till the summer of 1786 (with the exception of nearly two years, when a second family wind-fall enabled him to act the part of the gentleman *at large*), Cooke ran the customary round of Thespian itinerary; passing his noviciate in various provincial companies, particularly those of Nottingham and Lincoln. In July 1786, he enlisted under the banners of the York manager, Mr. Wilkinson, and came out in the part of Count Baldwin, the same night that Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance at that theatre, in Isabella, in the Fatal Marriage.

The May following, he repaired to Lancaster, having joined the Newcastle company, with whom he continued four years, performing successively at Newcastle, Chester, Lancaster, Preston, and other towns belonging to that district. In April 1791, he entered into an engagement with the manager of the Manchester theatre, to whom his talents were already experimentally known; Mr. Cooke having previously to his treaty with the York manager, acted at Manchester a whole season with great applause, besides a winter spent at Liverpool. In November 1794, Mr. Cooke visited the capital of the sister kingdom at the pressing invitation of Mr. Daly, at that time director of the Dublin stage.

He returned to England the following year; and in March 1796, re-joined the Manchester company, with whom he stood in high favour and repute; and indeed it reflects no small honour on the taste and penetration of the inhabitants of that town, that, among the foremost to discern, they have been among the foremost likewise to foster and encourage the talents of a man, who owes his professional success entirely to his own intrinsic merit.

In October 1797, Mr. Cooke made a second trip to Dublin, the management of that theatre having devolved into the hands of the present patentee, Mr. Jones. Here he remained three years, rapidly rising in celebrity and favour, being justly regarded as the hero of the Dublin stage, and the Roscius of Ireland.

(To be continued.)

MISCELLANY.

ANECDOTE OF PETER THE GREAT, CZAR OF MOSCOW.

COUNT Rasumosky's house is in every way answerable to the splendour of his entertainments. I am told, that

the structure alone cost him a million of rubles. He possesses many expensive pictures. In one of the rooms I observed a portrait of Peter the Great, which more resembled the statue of Falconet than any I had yet seen. Its features convey an elevation of soul and energy, perfectly consistent with a representation of that hero. A circumstance which the count related, gave an additional interest to the picture. He requested I would notice, that the head had been sewed into the present canvas on which the figure is painted. That small piece, he told me, was the only part that was original; the rest having been added by an ancestor of his own.

While Peter the First was travelling in Holland, in his usual incognito style, he stopped at an inn on the road for refreshments. He was shewn into a room where a large picture hung at the upper end: it was a portrait. And as he sat at his meat, he observed the landlord look several times from him to the portrait, and from the portrait to him, with a kind of comparative scrutiny. "Whose picture is that?" enquired the emperor. "The Tzar of Moscovy," replied the man: "it was brought to me from Paris, and every body says it is his very self. And I was thinking it is very like you, Sir."

Peter made no answer to this latter observation; but affecting to eat his dinner with too keen an appetite, to hear distinctly, finished it in a few minutes; and paying his reckoning as an ordinary passenger, sent the landlord out of the room on some excuse; then taking a knife from his pocket, cut the head from the shoulders of the portrait, and put it in his breast. He left a large sum of money on the table, more than sufficient, he thought, to pay the damage he had done; and immediately, before the mischief was discovered, took his departure in his humble equipage. This act was to prevent his being recognized as he pro-

ceeded, by any who might have afterwards stopped at the same inn, and, like the landlord, have perceived the resemblance; and certainly, but for the equivalent on the table, the deed itself would never have been supposed to have been that of the emperor.

On his return to Russia, he gave this relic to an ancestor of count Razumosky, to whom the monarch told the story attached to it, with much merriment at the idea of what must have been the amazement of the observing landlord, when he saw both the head and its likeness flown.

Sir R. K. Porter's Travels.

THE DRAMA.

BOSTON THEATRE.

It had been considered matter of deep regret, by every well read critic, from the fast establishment of the stage in America, that so little chance existed of their ever witnessing such delineations of character, as claimed preeminence before a London audience. The little patronage which could be afforded in the United States, it was imagined, would be an insuperable bar to the gratification of their desires; and they were therefore obliged to content themselves with the *second-rate* personations of Mr. Cooper and Mr. Fennel. But though they had not seen performers of greater excellence than these, yet they were happy that their taste had so far advanced, as to detect the manifest errors which both those actors frequently commit. The prospect so long cloudy and cheerless, has at length broken upon the intellectual view, embellished with all the art of European taste and the elegance of natural beauty.—*Mr. Cooke*, an actor of talents unrivalled on the English stage, having played sixteen nights in the city of New-

York, has at length arrived in this place ; and he made his first appearance in his favourite character of Richard the Third, on Thursday evening. This event was rather to be dreamed of than expected.

This play, notwithstanding considerable imperfection when considered as a whole, is one of the most distinguished efforts of poetic genius, when viewed in relation to the character of its hero. The mighty magic of Shakespeare's mind has diffused over the black catalogue of Richard's crimes, such charms of fancy and emotion, that, though you do not detest his character or his vices the less, yet you are interested in his conduct from the commencement to the conclusion of the play. Destitute as Richard is of every virtue to attract, debased with vices, not only not shaded but shocking from their glare, yet his discernment, address, policy, resource, courage, versatility, and consciousness of superior intellect, so far efface the disgust of their impression, that, perhaps, in no particular instance has Shakespeare more completely evinced his consummate acquaintance with human actions and motives than in their peculiar combination in this character. The passions which are exhibited from the first scene to the last, rapidly succeed each other, and are blended in all varieties of combination. The distinct features of character portrayed in the different behaviour of Richard to Lady Anne and Queen Elizabeth, Buckingham and Catesby, the Lord Mayor, Tyrell and Lord Stanley, are too evidently contrasted to be mistaken or unobserved.

To perform this character *well* requires more discrimination of judgment, command of tones, force of utterance, nicety of action, and power of face, than is demanded for any other personage in tragedy, with the exception of King Lear. It had never been played tolerably well upon the Boston stage ; but in every representation, the sense of

the author was frequently misunderstood, meaning was confounded in general exclamation, declamation was mistaken for passion, bustle for propriety, and abrupt transitions of voice for characteristic utterance. A taste formed upon so defective a model is sure to be vitiated; the true intention of the poet will never be sought for by the performer, unless the *spectator* will endeavour to understand *how* it should be enforced.

Mr. Cooke, in *his* personation, completely illustrated the general doctrine which we have advanced respecting the character of Richard; and we have no doubt has gone very far towards the general correction of our misguided taste. In this perfect performance, we were particularly impressed with the grounds of theatrical criticism in England; which are the more remarkable as they are seldom or ever considered of importance by an American audience, we mean judgment and discrimination. An actor with a clear, strong, and melodious voice, a beautiful person and face, the voice strained to the top of its compass or in abrupt transition, ranging from the lowest extreme to the highest, will *not* in that country be sufficient to obtain celebrity. Mr. Cooke teaches us, that a strut across the stage with a sudden swell of utterance, does not constitute good acting; that there is judgment required to mature a character, and taste to perform it with effect. *Mind* however is the primary requisite, without which person, voice, beauty are of no avail; the acting, though it may please, cannot be great, though it may gratify the eye and ear, can never satisfy the understanding. The personation of Mr. Cooke being founded upon a mature investigation of the character he plays, always *individualizes* the part, and he never varies from acknowledged excellence for uncertain flights of imagination.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of his playing seems to be a most perfect conveyance of the author's meaning, which is an attainment infinitely beyond a mere effort of judgment, though intimately connected with that faculty. It is this ability which may be said to give the highest character to elocution; and consists in such a complete command over the tones of the voice, as to give with precision any minute shade of meaning and complexity of sense. Now though judgment may dictate emphasis and propriety of conduct, it is a perfect command of tone combined with it, which can alone enforce the intentions of the poet most effectually.

Shakespeare therefore, as uttered by Mr. Cooke, was displayed in all his affluence of imagination, and the sterling value of his thought; every line had the peculiar meaning assigned to it, as well as the peculiar propriety of its tone.

The next characteristic of Mr. Cooke's performance which impressed us, was the charm by which he was enabled to render, every look, tone, emphasis and cadence, as if they were the result of the profound reflection of Richard the Third, and not the effect of mere memory. He thus afforded an illustrious example of that greatest difficulty in art, the power of concealing art.

Another peculiarity of Mr. Cooke seems to be his sedulously avoiding all attempts at declamatory vehemence, and all appeals to the audience as if they were parties concerned in the story of the play. He seemed to be so completely identified with his character, that you might even imagine he was not before an audience. No noisy rant when he makes his exit, no bustle and show when he enters, no aside speeches to the spectators, as if to tell them about Buckingham and Richmond; but like a statesman and man of subtle policy, his Richard the Third appeared from the commencement to the conclusion, to be governed by inter-

nal impulse, and to be placed aloof from the feelings of all around him.

Another point, which appeared to us remarkable, was the singular adaptation of his action to his character. Richard was lame and his arm was shrunk ; Mr. Cooke's action was confined, and his left arm was seldom used ; and whether he was standing still, walking thoughtfully, or in a rage, he was still the lame mishapen tyrant.

The observations we have made are so general as chiefly to apply to Mr. Cooke, as a player, rather than to his personation of Richard ; but as the peculiarities we have noticed are very proper to be remarked as forming a contrast to those of any performer we have ever before seen, they are on that account, properly entitled to attention.

With regard to his personation of Richard, too much panegyric cannot be bestowed on Mr. Cooke. Other actors have sometimes gratified us by a few scattered beauties ; but Mr. Cooke so profusely distributed his richness of delineation, that not a line was left uncertain in its meaning, not a pause was inadequately placed, and not a gesture was exhibited which did not demand attention—The readings too were unexampled for force and propriety : the following are noted, not because they are new, since they are *just*, but because *they deviate from any personation we have seen from Mr. Cooper.*

“The thief does fear each *bush* an officer.”

“Why what a peevish fool was that of *Crete*
Who taught his son the office of a *fowl*,
And yet for all his *wings* the fool was *drown'd* ;
Thou should'st have taught thy boy his *prayers* alone,
And then he had not *broke his neck* with climbing.”

“Oh may such *purple* tears be *always* shed
From those, who wish the downfall of *our* house.”

“Down, down to hell, and say *I* sent thee thither.”

"But soft—I'm *sharing spoils* before the field is won;
Clarence still breathes, *Edward* still lives and reigns,
 When they are *gone*, then must I count my gains."

"Why I can *smile*--and *murder*--while I smile,
 And cry *content*--to that which grieves my heart,
 And wet my cheek, with *artificial* tears,
 And suit my face--to all occasions."

The particular tone of this last passage however can no more be described, than its manner can be imitated.

"Unmanner'd slave, stand *thou* when I command!
 Advance thy halbert!--*higher* than my breast."

"Come, this *conscience* is a convenient scarecrow,
 It guards the fruit which *priests* and *wise men* taste,
 Who never set it up to fright *themselves*.
Conscience! 'tis our *coin*, we live by *parting* with it,
 And *he* thrives *best*, who has the most to *spare*."

"We cannot *fail*, my lord, when you are *pilot*!
 A little *flattery*, *sometimes* does well."

"Now do I fear I've done some strange *offence*
 That looks *disgracious* in the *city's* eye."

"Else wherefore breath I in a *christian* land."

"I cannot tell, if *to depart* in silence,
 Or *bitterly* to speak in your *reproof*,
 Fits best with *my degree* or *your condition*;
 Therefore, to speak in just *refusal* of your suit,
 And then in speaking *not* to *check* my friends,
Definitively thus I answer you."

"Th' aspiring youth that *fir'd* the Ephesian dome,
Outlives in *fame*, the pious fool that *rais'd* it."

"Crowns *got* with blood must be with blood *maintain'd*."

"Oh Buckingham! now do I play the *touchstone*
 To try if you be *current* friend indeed:
 Young *Edward* lives, so does his brother *York*,
 Now think what *I would speak*."

"Has he so long held out with me *untir'd*,
 And stops he now for *breath*?"

"There is a *busy something*—*here*,
That foolish custom has made *terrible*
To the intent of *evil deeds*."

Stan. "*Richmond is on the seas, my lord.*"

Rich. There let him *sink*, and be the *seas* on him.
White-liver'd renegade! what does he *there*?

Stan. I know not, mighty sovereign, but by *guess*.

Rich. Well—as you—*guess*?"

"I'll be in men's *despight*—a monarch!"

"Give me *another horse*—*bind up* my *wounds*."

"Now by my this day's hope, *shadows* to-night
Have struck more terror to the soul of *Richard*,
Than can the *substance* of a thousand men."

"Slave, *I have set my life* upon a *cast*,
And I will stand the *hazard* of the die.

These are a few among many more readings, in which Mr. Cooke claims preeminence over any performer that ever appeared in Boston.

COLLECTANEA.

SPANISH SOLDIERS.

"They'll fill a ditch as well as better men." SHAKSPEARE.

DR. NEALE in his letters from Portugal and Spain gives the following curious sketch of the army of Spain.

AN old Irishman, who has lived thirty-five years in Spain, lately said to a friend of mine here—"You must not trust too much to the Spaniards. I believe they always mean well, but they bluster, and after much bragging and many big words, like a passionate child, they scold themselves to sleep. This is their character in the common transactions of life. But, as to their army, it is a little other-

wise : during the last thirty-five years, I have watched its progress, and know it well. When they have had muskets, they generally want cannon ; if they have powder, they often are without flints ; if they are well fed, then they are naked ; if they get shoes, they want a loaf of bread ; if the soldiers would fight, the officers are unwilling ; and when the generals wish to have an engagement, the men are sure to run away. In short, my dear countryman, such is the Spanish army ; and what, in the name of wonder, can I expect from them now ? Only this, that they will leave you to your fate to get back to your ships as fast as you can : and you may think yourselves very fortunate, if, in the way, they do not put their knives into your men, whom they already denominate a pack of miserable heretics, and curse for their unasked assistance in entering their magnificent country."

Such are the sentiments of Dr. O'Leary. I repeat them as he stated them to my friend M'Leod, and leave you to make your own comments.

BETTERTON.

ARCHBISHOP Sancroft once asked this celebrated actor, " Pray, Mr. Betterton, can you inform me what is the reason you actors on the stage affect your audience by speaking of things *imaginary*, as if they were *real* ; while we in the church speak of things *real*, which our congregations receive only as if they were *imaginary* ?"—" Why, really, my lord," said Betterton, " I don't know ; except it is, that we actors speak of things *imaginary as if* they were *real*, while you in the pulpit speak of things *real as if* they were *imaginary*."

The song which follows, and is supposed to contain the sentiments of a Spanish warrior, displays a feeling in total opposition to the prose description of Spanish soldiers which occupies the preceding page.

"Should this heart, that beats for thee,

Be still'd amid the battle's rage,

Let the thought of victory,

Elvira's widowed woe assuage :

For that hour in holy heaven,

The patriot crown to me is giv'n.

"Hush the sigh, repel the tear !

O, never, never mourn my fate !

Sprinkle flowers on my bier,

As cold I enter Seville's gate :

With smiling joy Alphonso own,

Whose patriot soul to heaven is flown.

"Shew my sons the wounds that flow ;

Then give their infant hands the spear ;

Let them then the contest know,

That robs e'en infant hearts of fear :

Send them, unmov'd, to bear their part ;

And give your country all your heart."

BON MOT OF ARIOSTO.

ARIOSTO built a small house for himself. Being asked by his friend, how he, who described fine palaces in his "Orlando," could content himself with so small an edifice ? "Words are cheaper than stones," replied the philosophic bard.

WE MUST ALL LIVE.

AN author, who had sent his works as a present to a friend who was a professional critic, received this answer : "I thank you for your work, where I find many excellencies, and you will excuse my finding some fault ; for Algiers must starve, if Algiers is at peace with all the world."

LOVE.

The following lines are from the pen of a deceased female, who we learn by an English publication was the author of several unpublished novels and romances. From the tender sentiments they breathe, we are led to believe the author fell a victim to the passion she describes.

Man loves, but *to possess* ! and if unblest,
 His sickly fancy languishes, expires !
 But *Woman* clasps chimera to her breast,
 Small aliment her *purer* flame requires !
 She, like the young Camelion, thrives on air,
 Content no grosser sustenance to gain,
 Takes every tint from the lov'd object near,
 Clings to her griefs, and glories in her pain :
 Of *poorest* flow'rs, *she* forms triumphant wreaths !
 Her world contracted to one little space,
 Enough for her to breathe the air he breathes,
 To steal a look, unnoticed at his face !
 By happy accident to touch his hand,
 Bear on her heart a ringlet or a glove ;
 To sacrifice each wish to his command,
 Live but in him, and only live to love !

 EDITORIAL NOTICES.

THE extent of the critique on the performance of Mr. Cooke, has necessarily excluded that variety we intended the first number of the Cabinet should display. We presume that the general interest excited by the arrival in Boston of this celebrated performer, will be more fully gratified by this diffuseness, than by attention to articles of less local importance.

Our poetical friend will, we hope, pardon us for holding his communication in reserve.

CAMILLUS shall meet our early attention.

With the conclusion of the Biography, our next paper will contain a portrait of Mr. Cooke.